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ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify factors that motivated students at Pennsylvania State University and the University of Cyprus to major in elementary education and to compare the high school scholastic ability of these two groups of students. Questionnaires were completed by 157 randomly selected male and female Pennsylvania State University and 176 University of Cyprus students. Students were asked 22 questions that measured intrinsic factors related to why they had chosen to major in elementary education; four questions asked for demographic information. Statistical analysis of the data revealed major differences between the two groups of students. American students were more influenced by intrinsic factors such as love of teaching and love of students, while University of Cyprus students were more influenced by extrinsic factors such as guaranteed teaching positions, salary, and fringe benefits. There was also a clear difference in grade point average, with the Cypriot students scoring higher than the American students; this difference was consistent with the higher admissions standards in Cyprus. Copies of the questionnaire (in English and in Greek) are appended. (Contains 23 references.) (CH)

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THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE FACTORS THAT HAVE INFLUENCED STUDENTS AT THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY AND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS TO MAJOR IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

ELENA C. PAPANASTASIOU

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree
in Elementary Education
with honors in Curriculum and Instruction

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State College, PA
Spring 1996

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ABSTRACT

Many societies today place a considerable emphasis on elementary schools, and therefore expect a lot from teachers. However, the possibility of attaining desirable educational outcomes, and meeting society's expectations of the role of the teacher strongly depends on those employed as teachers, and especially on the factors that have influenced them to choose the profession. Sometimes students choose to become teachers because they like teaching, and working with children. Other students though, become teachers because they have no other alternatives. Such differences in motivation raise questions about the most common factors that influence students to become teachers. Thus, with the use of a questionnaire, this study aims to a) identify and compare the influence of the factors that have motivated students at the Pennsylvania State University and at the University of Cyprus to choose to major in Elementary Education, and b) to compare the scholastic ability of these students.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to investigate and compare the motives that have influenced students at the Pennsylvania State University and at the University of Cyprus to major in elementary education.

This study includes five chapters. The first chapter includes the problem statement and the significance of the problem. The second chapter reviews the existing literature in the US and in Cyprus on the topic. The third chapter discusses the methodology of the study and it includes the sampling procedures, methods used for data collecting and data analysis techniques, the research questions, as well as the operational definitions. The results of the study are presented in the fourth chapter. Finally, the fifth chapter includes the conclusions that were reached with this study.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Problem Statement

Many societies today place a considerable emphasis on elementary schools, and therefore expect a lot from teachers (MacLean, 1992). Several scholars think that this is because elementary school teaching reaches children at an early stage when they are more malleable and able to incorporate the attitudes and habits on which to build their future success. (Ornstein, 1978; Parelius, 1987). According to Edman (1968),

> a teacher is expected to be the possessor of knowledge which he [or she] can successfully impart to children; a student of the psychology of childhood; a disciplinarian responsible for conduct; an evaluator and counselor of children's' activities; a developer of curriculums; a public relations person dealing with parents; an eternal student in quest of new knowledge and new ideas for the pursuit of his[or her] profession. Furthermore, he [or she] must see clearly the major goals toward which education is to be directing his [or her] society and to do his[or her] part to see that these goals are accomplished. (p.12)

However, even though all of the above are usually expected from teachers, the possibility of attaining desirable educational outcomes and meeting society's expectations of the role of the teacher strongly depends on the quality of those employed as teachers, and especially on the factors that have influenced them to choose teaching as a profession. Sometimes students choose to become teachers because they like teaching and working with children. Other students, however, choose

to become teachers because they were not admitted in the major of their choice (Menelaou & Panagidi, 1993; Ornstein, 1983; Parkay & Hardcastle, 1991). Such differences in motivation raise questions about the most common factors that influence students to become teachers in relation to the educational system that these students deal with. In essence, the question is: are these factors, and their relative importance the same across nations?

Thus, the purpose of this study is,

1. to identify and compare the factors that have motivated third and fourth year students at The Pennsylvania State University and at The University of Cyprus to choose the teaching profession as applied to elementary school children.

2. to compare the scholastic ability while in high school that characterizes the students who are studying elementary education at the Pennsylvania State University and at the University of Cyprus.

Significance of the problem

As the philosopher Henry Adams observed, "a teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops". In addition, Smith (1986) adds that "[teaching] is a profession that profoundly affects the lives of every individual, and ultimately the strength and well-being of the nation." (p.39) Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that teaching should require complete dedication and utmost competence as far as the role of the teacher is concerned.

However, the quality of education, and especially of the teaching force in the US is a major concern throughout the nation. The failure to attract competent people in this

occupation is said to have reached crisis proportions (Ellis & Bernhard, 1992; Parkay & Hardcastle, 1991). This is why the identification and recruitment of the appropriate people into teaching, and especially into the elementary school teaching majors in colleges and Universities should be emphasized as the most important educational concern today.

In order to effectively identify the appropriate people for this occupation, the factors that attract these people to elementary school teaching have to be identified first. "The task requires the individual to be aware of how his or her interests, values, and abilities relate to specific occupations. The successful completion of the task of crystallization, therefore, requires the students to possess adequate self and occupational knowledge." (Niles, S. & Herr, E. L., 1989) Therefore, the significance of this study lies in the identification and comparison of the factors that have influenced students at two major Universities from two different countries (USA and Cyprus) to choose to major in elementary education. An understanding and comparison of these factors (in relation to the educational systems and social factors in the two countries, which has never been done before) can help improve the selection of the teaching force in both, the USA and Cyprus. So by identifying the factors that influenced students to choose the teaching major, administrators might determine if they should admit these students to the elementary school teaching major so that only the most and best qualified individuals will undergo training.

Limitations of the study

This research mainly focuses on the external, internal and alternative factors that have influenced students to choose to major in elementary education at the Pennsylvania State University and at the University of Cyprus. However, this research

will not study the influence of sex on the students choice of a profession, as well as of the influence of a family tradition where all members of a family are teachers.

In addition, the results of the study can only be generalized to elementary education teachers at the Pennsylvania State University and at the University of Cyprus since this is the group of students that were sampled. The study could have been more complete if it included other universities in the US or in Pennsylvania so that the results could be generalized more broadly.

Another limitation of the study is that self reporting instruments were used. When such instrument are used, people tend to lie and give socially acceptable answers rather then tell the truth.

Finally, as far as the bibliography of the study is concerned, no extensive study on motivating factors for teaching has been found for the US since 1986, even after exhaustive research was done.

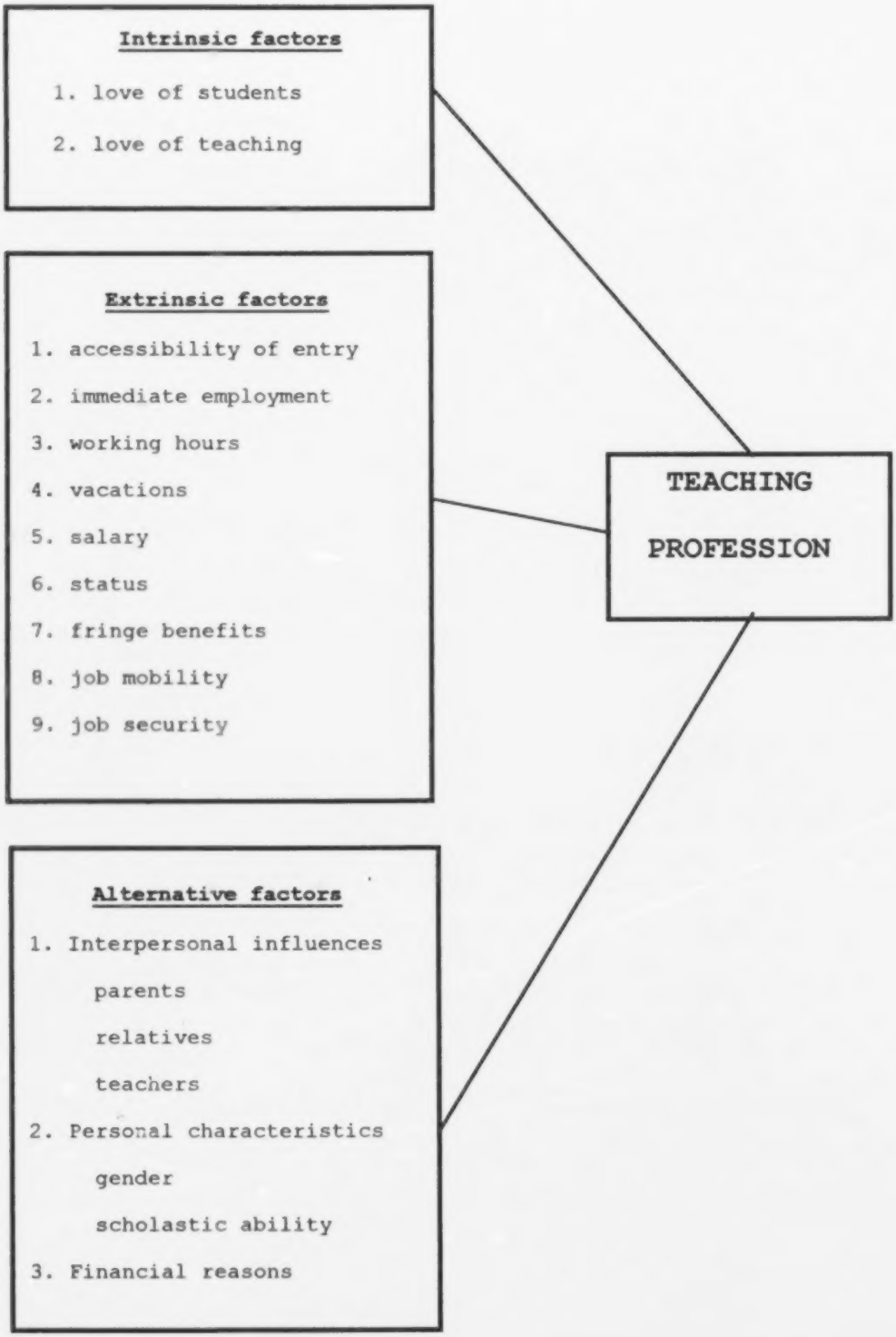
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The factors that might influence high school seniors in the US and in Cyprus to choose to study elementary education, as shown in the theoretical framework, will be classified as intrinsic, extrinsic and alternative factors. The intrinsic factors are associated with the act of teaching itself, and with the values that students hold for themselves. These factors may include the love of children, a desire to provide service to society, or even an excitement and interest in the teaching/learning process. The alternative factors are divided into three categories. The first category is that of interpersonal influences which are the cases in which students choose to become teachers because of the wish of a relative or a teacher. The second category is that of personal characteristics, such as gender and academic ability. The third category includes financial reasons that might encourage or refrain students from majoring in elementary education. The extrinsic factors include benefits that are attached to the teaching profession, and which influence students to enter the teaching major as well. These include factors like relatively short working hours, vacations, immediate or definite employment, and salary, which are experienced by all members of the profession in the same country.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



Intrinsic factors

The two intrinsic factors that are studied in this research are the "love of students" and the "love of the teaching/learning process".

Love of students

A strong love for and interest in students is one of the factors that influences individuals to enter teaching. In a study that was done by Ashikali and Agathokleous (1995) in Cyprus, elementary education students had to rate the amount of influence that certain factors had on their choice of teaching as a profession. The grade given for the factor "love of children" by sophomore teachers in Cyprus was 4.17/5 which was the highest mean given for any factor So this factor was ranked highest in Cyprus. Similar results were produced in a study done by NEA (1986) in the US, which aimed to measure the factors that influenced elementary education teachers in the US to choose their profession. In this study the factor labeled as "love of students" and the desire to work with young people was ranked highest among all the other factors as well.

Love of the teaching/learning process

According to Parkay & Hardcastle, people who love teaching are generally attracted by the process and the spontaneous aspects of teaching. They take full advantage of every teaching moment and make the most out of it (1991). The fascination of discovering knowledge is still another attraction of teaching. One can learn any subject in depth just by teaching it since teaching is a learning process as well (Parkay & Hardcastle, 1991). According to Menelaou and Panagidi (1993), the degree of influence that the love of the teaching - learning process had on students at

the University of Cyprus was $\bar{x}$ = 2.14/5, and it was ranked fourth out of the 10 factors which is among the top half factors that were tested. According to a similar study done by the NEA (1986) in the US, this factor was ranked ninth out of twenty factors, which again is among the top half factors that had influenced the teachers in the US to choose this specific career.

Extrinsic factors

The extrinsic factors studied in this research are "selection for training", "employment", "hours and vacations", "salaries", and "status of the profession".

Selection for training

There appears to be general agreement in the US that current admission standards for entrance to the elementary education major tend to be both lax and inappropriate. (Eltis, 1987; Parelius & Parelius, 1987; Mornane, Singer, et al., 1991) This factor, in turn, is believed to make teacher education programs attract a wide range of less qualified students. According to Parelius and Parelius (1987), teachers have always scored poorly on standardized scores of achievement and academic ability.

In order to be admitted into the elementary education major at the Pennsylvania State University, for example, the only academic requirement is to have a grade point average that is higher than 2.5/4, even though enrollment controls have made this closer to a 3.00/4. Therefore, a number of students might enter this major just because of its accessibility of entry and because they were unable to enter the major of their choice. In 1986, 131 out of the 1270 students that participated in a NEA study in the

US had stated that they had decided to become teachers because of the major's accessibility of entry (NEA, 1986).

The selection procedure of students for teacher training in Cyprus, though, tends to be very different. These differences are mainly caused because of the differences in the educational systems in the two universities. In order to be admitted to the college of education in the University of Cyprus, students have to compete with approximately 2,000 other candidates in the fiercely competitive University Entrance Examinations. According to the Cyprus Ministry of Education, during the examinations for admission during for the academic year 1995-96, 2,334 candidates had competed for the elementary education major. Therefore, the accessibility of entry is not a factor that influences students in Cyprus to choose teaching as a career. Among these 2,000 candidates, only 150 are admitted in the elementary education every year since this is the approximate number of elementary school teachers that will be needed in four years when these students graduate from the University. Since these examinations are highly competitive, the students that eventually get those positions, are the best out of all the candidates, and whose GPA while they were seniors in high school averaged 92 out of 100. These students ranked among the top 15% of the candidates that wanted to enter the elementary education major. (Papanastasiou, 1989).

Employment

Due to the fact that the students studying elementary education at the University of Cyprus are guaranteed by the government to be employed as teachers during the school year after they graduate, Ioannou and Christodoulou (1994) found that this factor was ranked as the second most influential factor for the students in Cyprus. This

factor, however, had equal ranking with the "love of the teaching/learning process" which is an intrinsic factor.

In the US, today, there is no guarantee that the students that graduate with a degree in elementary education will all be employed as teachers the year they graduate. Since there are so many Universities that offer this major, as well as so many students that major in it relatively to the teaching positions that are available, it is a natural consequence that employment will be difficult and competitive.

Hours and vacations

Teachers in the US as well as in Cyprus are frequently considered to have short working days and long vacations. Elementary schools in Cyprus have about 15 one day holidays per year, two week breaks for both Christmas and Easter, and long vacations of about two months in the summer. But during the academic year that extends from mid September until the end of June, the students go to school five days a week for approximately five hours a day. Schools in the US also have Christmas, Easter vacations, and weekends that are free as well. The average length of the required work day for all teachers in 1986 was 7.3 hours (NEA, 1986). This is why many college students are attracted to the working schedule of teachers. A study that was done in 1986 by the NEA in the US, shows that the factor of "long vacations " was ranked eighth out of twenty factors that were studied (NEA, 1986). The factor of vacations in another study was ranked eighth out of the twelve factors that have influenced students in Cyprus to choose teaching as a profession (Michaelidou and Siakalli, 1994). In the same study, the factor of working hours was ranked tenth (1994). Thus, it would appear that the students in Cyprus were not influenced by this factor as much as students in the US. Another interesting observation is that this factor is ranked higher

than the "love of the teaching/learning process" which was ranked ninth in the US (NEA, 1986), and fourth in Cyprus (Michaelidou and Siakalli, 1994).

Salaries

Dawn Oberman (1995), has concluded that the annual starting salary for school teachers in the US for 1995 averaged $22, 625. In 1985 Feistritzer (1985) took this pattern a bit further and found that in comparison to 36 occupations (among which some did not require a college degree), the teachers' salary was ranked 26th, and that the only occupations that were ranked below that, were occupations where a college degree is not a requirement. Therefore, since the teacher's salary in the US is so low, this factor cannot be considered as a motive that influences students in the US to enter the teaching profession. This view is supported by the fact that only 37% of all teachers that participated in a study done by Boyer (1990), responded that their salaries were "good" or "excellent".

In Cyprus, however, beginning elementary school teachers earn $17,118.5, which is $6,6922.5 higher than the Per Capita Income of the country when converted to US Dollars (Department of Statistics and Research, 1994). Thus, this is a much higher relative salary than that received by US teachers.

Status of the profession

The status of the teaching profession in elementary schools, just like any other profession is determined by many variables. According to Edman (1968), it is determined by a) salary and fringe benefits, b) mobility and promotions, c) appointment and dismissal of the employees, and by d) the selection and recruitment of the

employees. To the above, Demetriadou (1982) adds that the status of the teaching profession also depends on the quality of the teachers' training, as well as on the quality of the services that teachers provide to the society in which they work.

However, the status of the teaching profession, like that of any other profession, varies greatly from country to country. For example, Feistritzer (1986) found that this factor was ranked second in dissatisfaction among public school teachers who were drawn from a nationwide poll in the US. However, Papaperikleous and Hatziyiannakou (1995) found that the elementary school teaching profession ranked as second most influential in the general Cyprus society.

Alternative factors

The alternative factors that influence students to major in elementary education include the influence of parents, extended relatives and teachers.

Influenced by parents and extended relatives

The strongest single influence for students is usually that of their parents or other extended relatives with whom they come in daily contact (Parkay & Hardcastle, 1991). Students appreciate the advice of their elders, and often consider it indispensable. Therefore, some students enter the teaching profession because their relatives have influenced them to do so. In a study done in 1986 in the US it was shown that 22.9% of the teachers in the study were influenced by their parents or other relatives to become teachers, and this factor was considered sixth in importance out of twenty, (NEA, 1986) and it is among the top half of the reasons influencing their choice of teaching as a profession. In Cyprus, this factor was ranked eighth out of ten factors

(Menelaou & Panagidi, 1994), which is among the least influential factors. This suggests that parents in Cyprus had less of an influence than those in the US on the decision of their children to choose teaching as a profession.

Influenced by teachers

The adults that have the greatest influence on children beyond their parents or guardians, are teachers. Students, and especially young elementary school students, look up to their teachers and admire them. That is why in many cases, students choose to become just like their teachers when they grow up, and eventually join the teaching profession themselves. In other cases, by observing the students' characteristics, teachers directly suggest to them that they should become teachers as well. This situation is not very rare, and it is supported by a study that was published in 1986 by the NEA (1986) in the US, where it was found that 25.4% of the student-subjects were influenced by their teachers to become teachers themselves. This factor was ranked fourth (which is among the top half reasons) in importance and influence out of twenty factors. In Cyprus a similar study was done by Menelaou and Panagidi (1994). The factors they examined were similar to the factors studied by the NEA, even though they were presented in a condensed form. In this study this factor was ranked ninth (among the last half) out of ten factors (Menelaou & Panagidi, 1994), which shows less importance for this factor compared to the US.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Sampling procedures

For the purpose of this study, the sample for the study consisted of third and fourth year students that were studying Elementary Education at The Pennsylvania State University and at The University of Cyprus during the Fall of 1995. Unlike the students in Cyprus, who are all admitted to their majors the moment they enter the University, the students at the Pennsylvania State University are formally admitted into the Elementary Education major when they are juniors. Freshmen and sophomores in the US might still not be completely sure if they want to enter this major. Moreover, the possibility of them not being admitted to the major that they prefer, does exist as well. This is why first and second year students are not included in the study.

The questionnaire was completed by 157 students from the Pennsylvania State University, and by 176 students from the University of Cyprus. The questionnaire was administered to all students that were enrolled in certain elementary education classes which were selected randomly from the two universities. For representative sampling purposes, an equal number of junior and senior classes were selected for this study. However, from the 132 junior students that participated in the study altogether, only 42 of them were from the Pennsylvania State University. As far as the seniors are

concerned, from the 200 that participated in the study, 114 of them were from the Pennsylvania State University, and 86 were from the University of Cyprus.

Table 1

Number of students at each University according to years in school

	Junior Students	Senior Students	Total N	%
Pennsylvania State University	42	114	156	47
University of Cyprus	90	86	176	53
Total N	132	200	332	
Total %	39.8	60.2		100

There were 54 males that participated in the study, and 279 females. Thirty-one of the male students and 126 of the female students were from the American sample, while 23 males and 153 females were from the Cyprus sample.

Table 2

Number of students from each University according to sex

	Males	Females	Total N	%
Pennsylvania State University	31	126	157	47.1
University of Cyprus	23	153	176	52.9
Total N	54	279	333	
%	16.2	83.8		100

Due to the limitations of the study that are stated in chapter one, the results of this study can only be generalized to the third and fourth year students studying elementary education at the University of Cyprus and at the Pennsylvania State University, University Park.

Data collecting techniques

The data were collected with a questionnaire devised by the investigator using a Likert-type scale that ranged from one to five. The questionnaires were handed out to all students enrolled in classes that had been chosen randomly from both universities. The questionnaire was administered at the beginning of each class period, and they were handed back approximately fifteen minutes later.

The questionnaires in the US were written in English, while the ones in Cyprus were translated into Greek. To ensure that the translation into Greek was accurate, the English questionnaire was sent to two English teachers in Cyprus. Both teachers translated the questionnaires into Greek independently of each other. They then compared the two translations in order to see if there were any differences in the translations. Their translations were very similar, so this version of the translation was forwarded to a third English teacher. This third teacher translated the questionnaire from Greek to English. This translation resembled the original version of it in English, which meant that the questionnaire in Greek actually is the same as the original English version.

In order to see if the questionnaire that was devised was adequate to accomplish the study's goals, a pilot study was done. For the pilot study, 10

questionnaires were administered in Cyprus and 10 in the US, to sophomore students studying elementary education. The volunteer participants completed the questionnaires, and then wrote notes on any questions they were unsure of. Those notes were taken into consideration for preparing the final version of the questionnaire.

The final version of the questionnaire includes two parts. The first part includes 22 questions, that ask for the students' opinions about the reasons that made them choose to major in elementary education. These reasons are classified as intrinsic, extrinsic and circumstantial factors. The intrinsic factors were measured by questions 7, 8, 9, and 22. The circumstantial factors were measured by questions 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 18. Finally, the extrinsic factors were measured by questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, and 21. The full questionnaire appears as appendix A.

The second part of the questionnaire includes only four questions that ask about demographic information. These questions ask about the students' gender, the University they are currently attending, the year they are in school, as well as their GPA while they were seniors in high school. These questions on the second part of the questionnaire were asked to draw conclusions from any correlations that might exist in the responses to the questionnaires.

Research Questions

The research questions that will be answered are the following:

1. Is the scholastic ability of the Cypriot students higher than that of comparable American students?

2. Are the intrinsic factors that influenced students to choose the teaching profession the same in the US and Cyprus?

3. Are there more students in the US than in Cyprus that are influenced by adults (teachers, parents and other relatives) to become teachers?

4. In which of the two countries are there more students that major in elementary education because of financial and circumstantial reasons? (e.g. inability to enter the major of their choice, or inability to finance their studies in another major in a university abroad)

5. In which of the two countries are the extrinsic factors associated with the teaching profession (salary, job security working hours and vacations, fringe benefits, and promotions) more influential?

Measurement of Constructs

For the purpose of this study, the questions on the questionnaire have been classified in order to assess certain variables. To be specific:

1. The variable concerning the status of the profession is measured by the mean of the responses to question numbers 1 and 19 on the questionnaire used to collect data from the Pennsylvania State University and from the University of Cyprus. A copy of this questionnaire will be found in Appendix A.

2. The ease with which the elementary education major can be entered, (because of financial and other circumstantial reasons) is measured by the mean of the responses to question numbers 5, 6 and 18.

3. The interpersonal influence of teachers, relatives and other adults upon students' decisions to become elementary school teachers is measured by the mean of the responses to question numbers 11, 12, 13 and 14 on the questionnaire.

4. The importance of external factors upon the students' decisions to major in elementary education, such as the variable concerning the factor "working hours and vacations" is measured by the mean of the responses to question numbers 3 and 4.

5. The importance of the influence of "job security", and the guarantee to be employed immediately after graduation on the students' choice of majoring in elementary education is measured by the mean of the responses to question numbers 15 and 20 on the questionnaire that has been distributed.

6. The factor labeled as "love of teaching children" that has influenced the students to study elementary education is measured by the mean of the students' responses to question numbers 7, 8, and 9.

7. The influence of fringe benefits offered to teachers , and job mobility is measured by the mean of the students' responses to question numbers 16, 17 and 21.

Statistical analysis

An SPSS 4.0.5 program for Macintosh was used for the statistical analysis of the data, which consisted of two parts: descriptive and inductive statistics. By using descriptive statistics, the means, percentages and counts were calculated. In order to generalize the conclusion obtained from the sample, inductive statistics such as t-values and p-values were calculated as well.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The results of the data analyses are summarized in tables 3, 4, 5, and 6. Table 3 indicates the responses to the questions concerning the intrinsic factors for choosing elementary school teaching as a career. To be specific, the table lists the means and the standard deviations, the t-value, as well as the p-value which measures the significance of the responses to every construct.

Table 3

Intrinsic factors

		X	SD	T-Value	P-Value
Love of teaching children	PSU	1.26	.38	-11.19	0.00
	UCY	2.05	.8		
Inborn talent for teaching	PSU	1.88	.75	-7.76	0.00
	UCY	2.59	.91		

PSU : Pennsylvania State University
UCY : University of Cyprus
1 : Strongly agree
5 : Strongly disagree

According to the results from Table 3, it is clear that the difference in the responses from the two universities are large. The students from the Pennsylvania State University indicate that they strongly agree that they have chosen the elementary

education major because of the intrinsic factors labeled as "love of teaching children", while the students from the University of Cyprus merely agreed with the above statement. This difference in the responses from the two Universities was statistically significant, which suggests that the students in the US were more strongly influenced by the love of teaching children than the students in Cyprus. Due to this difference, the t-value for the "love of teaching children" factor was -11.19. The other intrinsic factor, that of inborn talent for teaching, had a t-value of -7.76 which means there is a great difference from the responses of the two samples. Even though both samples agreed that their inborn talent for teaching influenced them to choose this major, the responses from the Pennsylvania State University were stronger.

Table 4 indicates the responses to the extrinsic factors for choosing to major in Elementary Education. The construct that had the largest difference among the responses of the two samples was that of job security, and the t-value for that was 30.36. The large t-value accurately describes the largemvariance in the responses from the two samples. The students in Cyprus strongly agreed that the factor of job security (which included the aspect of guaranteed immediate employment) had influenced them to choose the elementary education profession, while the students from the Pennsylvania State University strongly disagreed with this statement. The next highest extrinsic construct was that of fringe benefits of teaching; the t-value for which was 14.52. In this case, the students from the Pennsylvania State University disagreed with the influence of their choice of fringe benefits, while the students from the University of Cyprus agreed with this statement. Next came the construct labeled as salary, and the t-value for that was 13.02. Just like with the factor of fringe benefits, the students from the Pennsylvania State University disagreed with the influence of this factor, while the students from the University of Cyprus agreed that they were influenced by the factor of

salary. The t-value for the hours and vacations for elementary school teachers was 10.55, which also means that they were influenced by the hours and vacations that teachers have, even though this factor was not as influential as the factors mentioned above. Finally, the extrinsic factor that had the smallest difference among the two samples difference (even though the difference was still significant) was that of "status of the profession", which had a t-value of 5.82. Influentially, this factor was of relatively less importance for both samples. However, on the Likert-scale, the US sample leaned toward disagreement with the statement, and the Cyprus sample leaned toward agreement with this statement. The questionnaire also included the extrinsic factor of autonomy in the classroom. The p-value for that was 0.011, which shows that this item was not as significant as the previous responses. However, the difference was significant, even though both samples responded that they were uncertain about the influence of this factor.

Table 4

Extrinsic factors

		X	SD	T-Value	P-Value
Security	PSU UCY	3.54 1.43	.6 .66	30.36	0.00
Fringe Benefits	PSU UCY	3.95 2.44	.61 .58	14.52	0.00
Salary	PSU UCY	3.87 2.52	.88 1.0	13.02	0.00
Hours/Vacations	PSU UCY	3.77 3.87	.71 .82	10.55	0.00
Status of the Profession	PSU UCY	3.26 2.71	.87 .84	5.82	0.00
Autonomy in Classroom	PSU UCY	2.78 3.05	.99 .96	-2.56	0.011

PSU : Pennsylvania State University
UCY : University of Cyprus
1 : Strongly agree 5 : Strongly disagree

Table 5 indicates the responses for the alternative reasons for majoring in Elementary Education. The table first lists the means and the standard deviations given from every sample for every factor. This table, like those above, lists the t-values for every factor (which measure the difference in the responses between the two samples), as well as the p-value (which measures the significance of the responses to every factor).

Table 5

Alternative Factors

		X	SD	T-Value	P-value
Interpersonal Influences	PSU UCY	2.8 3.53	.82 .83	-8.09	0.00
Financial/ Circumstantial	PSU UCY	4.55 4.41	.41 .61	2.49	0.011

PSU : Pennsylvania State University
UCY : University of Cyprus
1 : Strongly agree
5 : Strongly disagree

The alternative factor labeled as interpersonal influences, had a t-value of -8.09 which made the difference in the two responses statistically significant since their p-value was 0.00. The US sample leaned toward agreement with the statement, while the Cyprus sample leaned toward disagreement with this statement. The construct labeled as financial and other circumstantial reasons had a t-value of 2.49. Both samples had stated that they disagreed that they were influenced by financial and other circumstantial factors such as their inability to enter the major of their choice, even though the sample from the Pennsylvania State University disagreed with that to a much stronger degree.

Table 6 lists the grade point average (GPA) of the two samples while they were seniors in high school.

Table 6

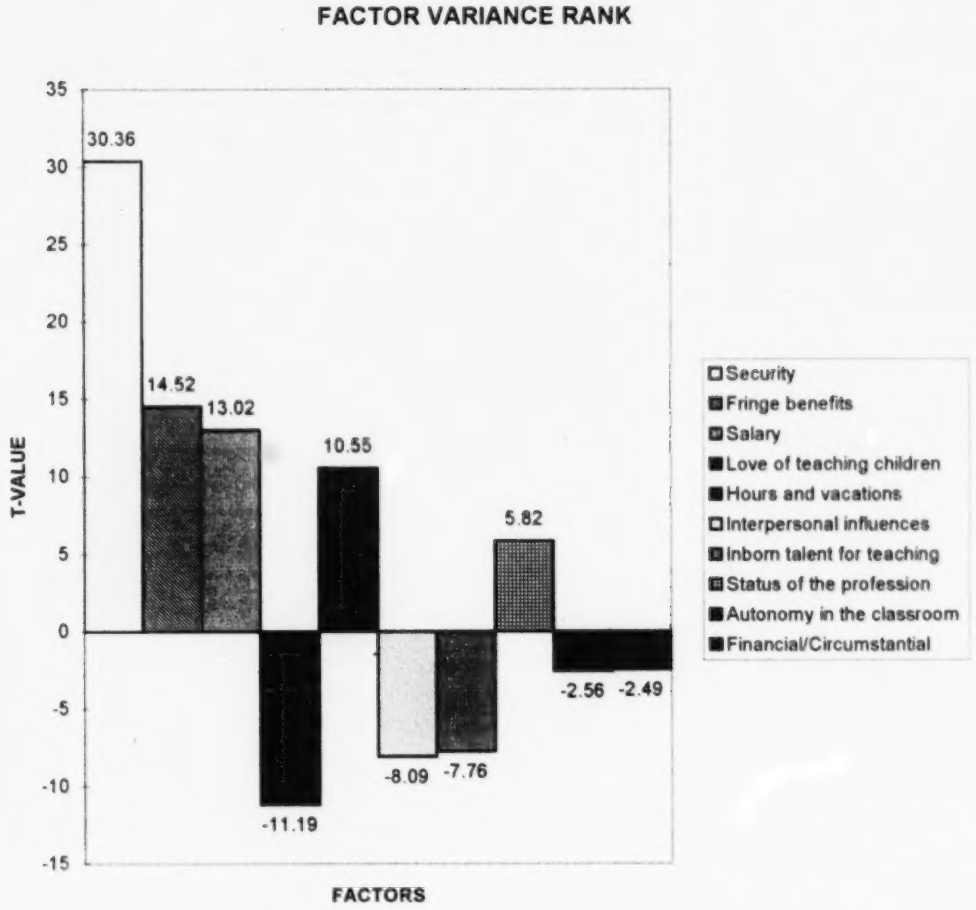
Student GPA (Grade Point Average)

	X	SD	T-Value	P-Value
Pennsylvania State University	4.13	.89	-7.36	0.00
University of Cyprus	4.71	.5		

This table shows that there is a significant difference in the GPA from the two samples of students. The p-value is 0.00, and the t-value which shows the amount of difference is -7.36. This means that the high school GPA in high school of the Cypriot students studying at the University of Cyprus was higher that that of the American students studying at the Pennsylvania State University. According to the same results,85% of the Cypriot students had a GPA that ranged between 3.5 and 4, out of 4. On the other hand, 85% of the American students of the study had a high school GPA that ranged between 3.0 and 3.4.

Finally, graph 1 summarizes all of the information that was mentioned above. This graph includes all the factors whose influence in choosing the Elementary Education major was measured in the questionnaire that was distributed to the two populations. The factors were placed on the graph from highest influentially to lowest, according to their absolute t-value. The factors that were more influential for the

the students at the Pennsylvania State University were placed above the x axis, while the factors that were more influential for the Cypriot student were placed below the x axis.



By observing the graph below, it is clear that the factors with the highest t-values, are generally the most influential at the Pennsylvania State University, while the factors that have the lowest t-values are more influential at the University of Cyprus.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION - CONCLUSION

The major purpose of this study was to identify and compare the factors that had influenced students at the Pennsylvania State University and at the University of Cyprus to major in elementary education, as well as to compare the grade point average that they earned while they were in high school. The results of this study, support the hypothesis that there are major differences in the responses from both Universities.

It is also clear that there is a difference in the grade point average that the students of the two Universities had while they were in high school. The GPA of the Cypriot elementary education students was higher than that of the Pennsylvania State University students of the same major. This result is not surprising, though, since this is one of the most competitive majors to enter in Cyprus. A very limited amount of students (about 150) are admitted into this major every year, so all students have to compete with each other. There are no specific set criteria for admission. A student just needs to be among the 150 best candidates (out of approximately 2,000) that are competing for entrance into the major. Therefore, only the very best students (according to academic ability) are eventually admitted into it. The admissions criteria at the Pennsylvania State University, though, are not as competitive. As long as a student has a GPA that is higher than 3.0 / 4.00 , this student can enter the major. This might

be the reason why the GPA of the American sample of students for this study was not as high as that of the Cypriot students.

The intrinsic factors for entering the elementary education major were the strongest factors that influenced students from the Pennsylvania State University to major in elementary education as well, but not for the students from Cyprus. The two intrinsic factors were highly influential for the students from the University of Cyprus to enter the same major, but they were not the two highest factors compared to all of the factors that were measured in this study. The factors of "fringe benefits" and "salary" were ranked higher than the "love of teaching children". Moreover, the "job security" factor was ranked the highest out of any other factor in Cyprus. This might be because the extrinsic aspects of the elementary school teaching positions are so rewarding in Cyprus, that most people associate the teaching profession with those factors (e.g. high salaries, guaranteed employment, fringe benefits). Therefore, when choosing a profession, this sample of students tends to place more emphasis on these extrinsic aspects of the teaching position, and less emphasis on the intrinsic aspects of teaching, and on their personal interests.

On the other hand, teacher's salaries in the US are generally not as high as in Cyprus, and elementary education students are not all guaranteed teaching positions immediately after they graduate from the University. That is why the students from the American sample strongly disagreed that they were influenced by these factors. Therefore, the students that eventually do choose to enter this major, report that they are truly and intrinsically interested in it since its extrinsic benefits are not high.

In addition, the students from the Pennsylvania State University have disagreed with the fact the they entered the major because of the status it holds. This is expected,

and the low status of the profession is reflected by the relatively low salaries that teachers are paid throughout the US. The same students have also strongly disagreed that they have entered the major because of the security of the job or because they will immediately be employed after they get their teaching degree. Teachers in the US are not guaranteed a job after they graduate from the University. Therefore, compared to the students in Cyprus, these are not considered as motivating factors for entering the teaching profession.

On the contrary, students in Cyprus, as mentioned before, are guaranteed employment after graduation, while their teaching position is also secured after two years of teaching. Therefore, it is reasonable for Cypriot students to strongly agree that they have entered the elementary school teaching major because of the job security.

Another difference in the responses from the two samples is that the students from the Pennsylvania State University are influenced by adults to major in elementary education to a higher degree when compared to the students in Cyprus. This could mean that in many cases where teachers in the US had influenced their students to become teachers, those students did manage to achieve that goal. In Cyprus, however, even if a teacher had influenced certain students to become elementary school teachers themselves, these students may have not passed the University entrance examinations to enter the major.

The responses that the two samples have provided also show that the students from the Pennsylvania State University were more highly influenced by their extended relatives (excluding their parent) to choose the teaching profession, as opposed to the Cyprus sample. In addition, the students from the University of Cyprus were more highly influenced by their parents to choose the elementary education profession as

opposed to the American sample. The reason that the Cypriot parents were more influential on their child's choice of majoring in elementary education, could be because of their focus on extrinsic benefits offered to teachers such as high salaries, long summer vacations, and guaranteed immediate employment. These parents might believe that these aspects of the profession will be beneficial for their children, especially since there so many Cypriots with college degrees who cannot find employment in Cyprus. However, teachers in the US are not offered as high salaries as Cypriots, and they are not guaranteed employment either. That may be why they apparently have not encouraged their children to enter this major.

The responses from both samples indicated that they all strongly disagreed with the fact that they entered the elementary education major because of financial and circumstantial reasons, such as inability to enter the major of their choice, or inability to finance their own studies in another major. The t-value for this construct was not as significant since the responses from both samples were so similar (even though the difference was significant). This response was expected from the Cyprus sample. If a student has done well enough in the entrance examinations to enter the elementary school teaching major, this student could probably enter any other major with great ease. From the sample of students that was used from the Pennsylvania State University, it turned out that the majority of the students had high GPAs while they were in high school. Therefore, one could assume that their GPA from their studies at the University would be high as well. Consequently, they would have had no problem in entering any major as far as their academic ability is concerned.

Studying at the University of Cyprus, or in any other Greek University that requires the University entrance examinations for admissions, is free. Therefore,

financial reasons could not be considered as a prohibition from choosing another major. In addition, there is a set and standard tuition fee that all students have to pay at the Pennsylvania State University regardless of their major. Therefore, financial reasons could not be considered as prohibiting the student from choosing another major besides elementary education.

The students from both Universities have stated that they strongly disagreed that they have entered the teaching profession because of the hours that teachers have to work, or because of the long summer vacations that they have. It might seem that teachers do not have to work for many hours daily since they only work until about 3.00 p.m. in the US, and until about 1.30 p.m. in Cyprus. However, teachers need a lot of preparation in order to teach the next day. Therefore, teaching is more like a day long commitment rather than a morning job. Many teachers also have to work during summer vacations as well. Many work at summer camps, others tutor students that have had problems with their school work, while others also work in panels for curriculum improvements. Therefore summer vacations for teachers are not as relaxing as one might think.

Finally, the students from both universities had very similar responses for the extrinsic factor of "autonomy in the classroom". In both cases, the students had stated that they were uncertain about the influence of this factor. This is reasonable, though, since none of the students had actually had any real teaching experience in a classroom of their own to be able to judge the amount of autonomy that teachers actually have in their classrooms.

In conclusion, by reviewing the results of this study one can see that the students from both Universities have been strongly influenced by intrinsic factors such

as the love of teaching and the love of students to enter the elementary education major. However, these factors have been more influential for the students at the Pennsylvania State University. The students at the University of Cyprus have also been greatly influenced by extrinsic factors, such as the fact that they are guaranteed teaching positions the year after they graduate from the University, as well as by the job mobility, and fringe benefits such as pension and sick leave that are offered to teachers. In addition, neither group of students has been influenced by the teachers' autonomy in their classrooms, or by financial and other circumstantial reasons. Finally, the students from the Pennsylvania State University strongly disagree with the fact that they have been influenced by extrinsic factors such as teacher's salaries, job security, fringe benefits, the status of their profession, or because of work hours and/or vacations. However, the students that enter this major in Cyprus have a higher academic ability than the students at the Pennsylvania State University, even though the GPAs of both samples were high.

It is encouraging to know that the future elementary school teachers from both Universities have high academic abilities. This can enable them to do their job more efficiently. However, it is quite discouraging to observe that the students in Cyprus give so much emphasis to the extrinsic benefits of the profession rather than to the intrinsic ones. One would expect that providing attractive extrinsic benefits to the candidates for teaching would attract the most qualified individuals who also love the profession to enter the major. This does not seem to be the case in Cyprus, though.

Suggestions

This study has identified the factors that have influenced students from the Pennsylvania State University and from the University of Cyprus to enter the elementary education major, in relation to the educational benefits that are provided to teachers in each county, as well as the GPA that these students had while they were seniors in high school. However, this study was not designed to identify what qualities make a good teacher. Being aware of those qualities, in addition to the factors that caused students to major in elementary education, could enable the two Universities, as well as many others, to change their admissions criteria to certain major so that only the most qualified individuals can undergo training. Identifying what makes a good teacher, as well as examining the effectiveness of the University admissions criteria for the elementary education program, could be the foci of other studies that could be done in the future.

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APPENDIX A

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE FACTORS THAT
INFLUENCED STUDENTS AT THE
PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
AND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS
TO CHOOSE TEACHING AS A PROFESSION

INSTRUCTIONS

In this questionnaire you will find questions that will ask for your opinion, and another four that will ask you about facts. Please answer the statements below by choosing the letter that best corresponds to your opinion. Possible answers range from "A= strongly agree" to "E= strongly disagree".

Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A	B	C	D	E

The reasons I have decided to major in elementary education are because:

1. Teaching is a high status profession	A	B	C	D	E
2. Teachers earn high salaries	A	B	C	D	E
3. Teachers have long vacations	A	B	C	D	E
4. Teachers do not have to work for many hours every day	A	B	C	D	E
5. Teaching is an easy academic major to get into	A	B	C	D	E
6. I was unable to enter the major of my choice because my test scores and grades in high school were too low	A	B	C	D	E
7. I love teaching	A	B	C	D	E
8. I love the teaching/learning process	A	B	C	D	E
9. I love working with young children	A	B	C	D	E
10. Teachers have a lot of autonomy in the classroom	A	B	C	D	E

Strongly agree A	Agree B	Uncertain C	Disagree D	Strongly disgree E

11. A teacher of mine has encouraged me to become a teacher	A	B	C	D	E
12. I want to model a teacher of mine	A	B	C	D	E
13. My parents have encouraged me to become a teacher	A	B	C	D	E
14. A relative of mine has encouraged me to become a teacher	A	B	C	D	E
15. Teachers are employed immediately after they graduate from the University	A	B	C	D	E
16. Teachers have many job possibilities available to them	A	B	C	D	E
17. Teachers get promoted easily	A	B	C	D	E
18. Financial reasons made me unable to study something else	A	B	C	D	E
19. People in other occupations value teachers	A	B	C	D	E
20. Teaching is a secure job	A	B	C	D	E
21. The teaching profession includes many fringe benefits (pension, sick leave)	A	B	C	D	E
22. I believe I have an inborn talent for teaching	A	B	C	D	E

Please complete the following demographic information:

23. What is your gender?
    A. Male
    B. Female

24. At what University are you studying?
    A. The Pennsylvania State University
    B. The University of Cyprus

25. I am a
    A. junior
    B. senior

26. My GPA during my senior year in High School was:

	Cyprus	U.S.A.
A.	1 - 9	0.0 - 1.9
B.	10 - 12	2.0 - 2.4
C.	13 - 15	2.5 - 2.9
D.	16 - 18	3.0 - 3.4
E.	19 - 20	3.5 - 4.0

APPENDIX B

ΜΕΛΕΤΗ ΤΩΝ ΠΑΡΑΓΟΝΤΩΝ ΠΟΥ ΕΠΗΡΕΑΣΑΝ ΤΟΥΣ ΦΟΙΤΗΤΕΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟΥ ΤΗΣ PENNSYLVANIA ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟΥ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ ΝΑ ΕΠΙΛΕΞΟΥΝ ΤΟ ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΙΚΟ ΕΠΑΓΓΕΛΜΑ

Οδηγίες

Σε αυτό το ερωτηματολόγιο θα βρείτε 22 ερωτήσεις που ζητούν τη γνώμη σας και τέσσερις που ζητούν δημογραφικές πληροφορίες. Παρακαλώ απαντήστε στις πιο κάτω ερωτήσεις επιλέγοντας το γράμμα που αντιπροσωπεύει καλύτερα τη γνώμη σας. Οι πιθανές απαντήσεις είναι:

A = διαφωνώ απόλυτα
B = διαφωνώ
C = αβέβαιος/η
D = συμφωνώ
E = συμφωνώ απόλυτα

Λόγοι για τους οποίους επέλεξα το διδασκαλικό επάγγελμα:

1. Ο δάσκαλος είναι επάγγελμα με μεγάλο κύρος	A	B	C	D	E
2. Οι δάσκαλοι παίρνουν ψηλούς μισθούς	A	B	C	D	E
3. Οι δάσκαλοι έχουν μεγάλες διακοπές	A	B	C	D	E
4. Οι δάσκαλοι ΔΕΝ χρειάζεται να δουλεύουν πολλές ώρες την ημέρα	A	B	C	D	E
5. Είναι εύκολο να γινεις δεκτός/ή στο πανεπιστήμιο στον κλάδο του δασκάλου	A	B	C	D	E
6. Δεν μπόρεσα να μπώ στον κλάδο της επιλογής μου γιατί η επίδοσή μου στις εξετάσεις ήταν χαμηλή	A	B	C	D	E

7. Μου αρέσει να διδάσκω	A	B	C	D	E
8. Μου αρέσει η διαδικασία της διδασκαλίας/μάθησης	A	B	C	D	E
9. Μου αρέσει να δουλεύω με μικρά παιδιά	A	B	C	D	E
10. Οι δάσκαλοι έχουν μεγάλη ανεξαρτησία στην τάξη	A	B	C	D	E
11. Ένας δάσκαλος μου με ενεθάρρυνε να γίνω δάσκαλος/λα	A	B	C	D	E
12. Έχω ως πρότυπο ένα δάσκαλο μου	A	B	C	D	E
13. Οι γονείς μου με ενεθάρρυναν να γίνω δάσκαλος/λα	A	B	C	D	E
14. Ένας συγγενής μου με ενεθάρρυνε να γίνω δάσκαλος/λα	A	B	C	D	E
15. Οι δάσκαλοι βρίσκουν δουλειά αμέσως μετά την αποφοίτησή τους από το πανεπιστήμιο	A	B	C	D	E
16. Οι δάσκαλοι έχουν πολλες πιθανότητες εξεύρεσης εργασίας	A	B	C	D	E
17. Οι δάσκαλοι προάγονται εύκολα	A	B	C	D	E
18. Οικονομικοί λόγοι με εμπόδισαν να σπουδάσω κάτι άλλο.	A	B	C	D	E
19. Άτομα σε άλλα επαγγέλματα εκτιμούν τους δασκάλους	A	B	C	D	E
20. Το διδασκαλικό επάγγελμα είναι μια σίγουρη δουλειά	A	B	C	D	E
21. Το επάγγελμα του δασκάλου έχει πολλά επιπρόσθετα ωφελήματα (σύνταξη, άδεια ασθενείας)	A	B	C	D	E
22. Πιστεύω ότι έχω έμφυτη κλίση για τη διδασκαλία	A	B	C	D	E

Παρακαλώ συμπληρώστε τις πιο κάτω προσωπικές πληροφορίες

23. Ποιο είναι το φύλο σας;

A. Άνδρας
B. Γυναίκα

24. Σε ποιο πανεπιστήμιο σπουδάζετε;

A. Πανεπιστήμιο Pennsylvania
B. Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου

25. Φοιτώ στο

A. Τρίτο έτος σπουδών
B. Τέταρτο έτος σπουδών

26. Ο γενικός βαθμός μου τον τελευταίο χρόνο στο Λύκειο ήταν:

A. 1.0 - 9.9
B. 10.0 - 12.4
C. 12.5 - 15.4
D. 15.5 - 18.4
E. 18.5 - 20.0